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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0304
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2123
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1506
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 001316

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SUBJECT: "MATRYOSHKAGATE" FALL-OUT: EVERYBODY WANTS TO JOIN
THE OPPOSITION

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Classified By: DCM Lee Litzenberger, REASON 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Since opposition MP Omurbek Tekebayev was cleared of drug smuggling charges in Poland and returned to Kyrgyzstan, the "Matryoshkagate" scandal has been the talk of the town -- and of Parliament. Looking relaxed and confident -- and clearly enjoying his role as a national hero -- Tekebayev told us September 13 about his ordeal in Poland and who he thinks might have been behind the plot against him. He said that the ultimate impact of the scandal on the Bakiyev government would depend on how President Bakiyev addressed Parliament's demands for reforms and a full investigation. President Bakiyev appeared before Parliament September 14, promising his full support to both the parliamentary and state commissions investigating the affair, and stating that constitutional reform would go forward quickly. Parliament will continue to debate the issue September 15, and on September 17, Tekebayev and other opposition politicians will participate in a "Kurultai," an opposition rally in the southern Aksy district. The incident has re-energized the political scene, and resurrected Tekebayev, the Parliament, and the opposition. END SUMMARY.

TEKEBAYEV ON MATRYOSHKAGATE

12. (C) Wags in Bishkek have dubbed the growing scandal surrounding the apparent planting of drugs by Kyrgyz security services on former Speaker and current MP Omurbek Tekebayev "Matryoshkagate," and the impacts from the scandal are spreading. Immediate fall-out from the scandal has hit the National Security Service (SNB), with President Bakiyev removing his brother Janysh as SNB First Deputy Chairman and accepting the resignation of SNB Chairman Busurmankul Tabaldiyev. (NOTE: SNB Deputy Elmurza Satybaldiyev has been appointed Acting SNB Chairman. END NOTE.) But the scandal has also emboldened the Parliament, and it has rehabilitated Tekebayev, making him again a national figure. Tekebayev

made a surprise showing at the DCM's welcoming reception on September 13 and used the occasion to sit down and tell us about his ordeal in Poland, who he suspects might have been behind the set-up, and what he thinks will follow. Tekebayev supporters, including Emil Umetaliyev, Omurbek Andrakhmanov, and NGO leader Asiya Sasykbaeva, participated in the discussion, over beer and wine in the Ambassador's garden.

13. (C) Looking relaxed and confident, and clearly enjoying his role as a national hero, Tekebayev described his time in Poland from the arrest at the airport September 5 to his release by a court three days later. Not usually a reserved person, he surprised himself at how calmly he had reacted to the situation. He was impressed with the Polish court system. The judge "evaluated all the evidence" (such as no fingerprints on the matryoshka), Tekebayev's background, and the political situation in Kyrgyzstan, and ruled that it was not possible Tekebayev would risk his reputation by carrying drugs. Interestingly, Tekebayev was also asked during the hearing if he was a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, and he responded that it would be impossible, as he was an atheist, as well as the founder and leader of a social democratic party.

14. (C) Tekebayev said he was not convinced that Janysh Bakiyev masterminded the plot against him; he said he suspected former Presidential Chief of Staff Usen Sydykov, a "schemer" with motive and access. He laid out the following scenario: Opposition demands led to Sydykov's dismissal as Chief of Staff in May 2006. Sydykov's son is the vice president of Bishkek's Manas Airport. Sydykov has long had a rivalry with Bakiyev's brothers, and he reportedly had advised Bakiyev to remove his brothers from their government posts. Sydykov has a connection (same home area, maybe more) to Airport security chief Nadir Mamyrov, who was seen in the

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airport surveillance tapes showing an interest in Tekebayev's bag (Ref B), and who has reportedly written a letter to President Bakiyev confessing and saying that Janysh Bakiyev was behind the plot. (NOTE: Several versions of Mamyrov's letter have surfaced, and Mamyrov himself is reportedly in hiding. END NOTE.)

15. (C) Regarding further fall-out from the scandal, Tekebayev said that the next few days would be crucial. Much would depend, he said, on whether President Bakiyev appeared before Parliament and how he addressed Parliament's demands. If Bakiyev gave a reasonable explanation of events, asked forgiveness for past mistakes, recalled his brothers from their positions (Ambassador to Germany; trade rep at the Kyrgyz Embassy in China), and promised soonest constitutional reform, then Parliament may give him a chance. Similarly, what happens at the opposition "Kurultai" rally on September 17 would depend on what happens in Parliament over the next two days.

16. (C) Separate from the discussion of Tekebayev's case, one guest in this group relayed Foreign Minister Jekshenkulov's reported comments on the PNGing of two U.S. diplomats this past summer. Standing with a small group in the lobby of Parliament September 12, Jekshenkulov was asked to comment on the "diplomatic scandal." He said that he could not stop the PNG process because people "there" (pointing to the ceiling) had showed him pictures taken by the two U.S. diplomats at a sauna, where some high level officials were cavorting with "girls."

BAKIYEV IN PARLIAMENT

17. (U) On September 14, the whole cabinet and the heads of presidential offices attended the Parliamentary session devoted to Tekebayev's case. President Bakiyev appeared before the deputies, saying he wanted to discuss the current situation. He detailed actions taken to investigate the

incident, and he promised full support to the investigations by both the state and parliamentary commissions. He pledged that constitutional reform (which appeared to be on a back-burner) would now go forward quickly, with hearings on the draft constitutions to begin soon in Parliament. He vigorously defended his family members, saying that they had gotten their government jobs based on merit. He noted that in many countries there were examples of relatives occupying high positions.

18. (U) Asked why the National Security Council was not involved in the investigation, Bakiyev said that was because Security Council Secretary Gen. Miroslav Niyazov was on leave. He then disclosed that Niyazov would be moving to a different (unspecified) position once he returned from leave. Bakiyev commented that if he had been Niyazov, he would have come back from vacation under these circumstances. Parliament then questioned current Chief of Staff Abdyldayev about the case. The session devoted to the case will continue September 15, with the possible vote on a (now watered-down) resolution censuring the government.

COMMENT

19. (C) Matryoshkagate has shifted the political landscape, though we are not sure what the ultimate fall-out will be. Parliament is clearly emboldened by the scandal, challenging the President and other members of the government. The SNB has seen a shake-up, at least at the top. President Bakiyev has been put on the defensive. The opposition is invigorated. And Tekebayev has been politically resurrected, from an outcast following his dismissal as Speaker to a national hero now. We think Tekebayev had a purpose in

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coming the reception and staying so long, and that was to gauge his standing with the international community, and with us, in particular. The GOKG officials at the event, including Deputy Foreign Minister Sarbayev, Deputy Defense Minister Oruzbayev, and others, immediately flocked to him when he arrived, eager to hear his story. As one guest observed, everyone wants to be in the opposition now. In any event, all eyes will be on the Parliament -- and on the opposition "Kurultai" at the weekend. END COMMENT.
YOVANOVITCH